

DATE: March 17, 1986

TO: Mary Ellen Crowley, OSC
EPA Region VI, Emergency Response Branch

THRU: Gerald Fontenot, Deputy Project Officer
EPA Region VI, Emergency Response Branch

THRU: Michael G. Warner, TAT Leader *MGW*
Region VI, Technical Assistance Team

FROM: Johnny S. Udo, TAT Member *J.U./CEB*
Region VI, Technical Assistance Team - Houston

SUBJECT: Investigative Report on Specialty Polymers Site, 1331 Holmes
St., Houston, Texas

TDD#: 06-8602-23

9647543



Background: The preliminary assessment and investigation on Specialty Polymers was conducted by Texas Water Commission. Based on their report, I decided to continue the background investigation. On March 12, 1986, Paul Wang and I went to the U.S. Bankruptcy Court, Houston, Texas for further investigation. We found out that the Law firm of Womack, Cohom and Stone, 4600 Post Oak Place, Suite 301, Houston, Texas 77027, represents the Schwartz family in the suit against Specialty Polymers. As it turned out, Schwartz owned the property and they are now resident of Midland, Texas. I contacted Cheryl Cohom of Womack Cohom and Stone she contacted the famil and James Howell

called me. The following is the conversation with Mr. James Howell.

James Howell is married to Janet Schwartz and Viola N. Schwartz was his mother-in-law, now deceased. The property at 1331 Holmes Street, Houston was originally owned by Viola and Nelson Schwartz. Prior to Nelson Schwartz's death in 1979, he sold the property to Specialty Polymers on notes (mortgage). Specialty Polymers was then managed by Charles Knight, now part owner of Isotec Corp. in Houston, Texas. After Nelson's death, Janet Schwartz (James Howell's wife) inherited one-half of the notes and the notes were secured by the property.

In 1983, Charles Knight (Specialty Polymers) encountered financial difficulties and could not meet the company financial obligations; consequently, he wanted to sale one-half of his notes to the family. Janet Schwartz Howell bought Specialty Polymers' notes and the Schwartz family became wholly owner of the property. However, the

06-8602-23

Page 2

family agreed to lease the property to Specialty Polymers per their contractual agreement.

In 1983, Specialty Polymers entered into Chapter 7 Bankruptcy, and the company was abandoned and became inactive. Efforts to get Charles Knight to cleanup the site were fruitless and it is known that all Specialty Polymers assets were tied down in bankruptcy court. However, the family has decided to cleanup the property and look for legal avenue later to recover their money from Charles Knight.

The family, in 1985, contracted Cecos International, a subsidiary of Brown and Ferris of Houston, Texas to quote them the cost of sampling and later removal action; but, in 1985, Moody Pickard, employee of Cecos International assigned to this project, was murdered. Recently, Kurt Volkmeir, an employee of Cecos has been assigned to continue with the project. The cost proposal for this project is expected to be ready in the week of March 16, 1986. The family will contact TWC for appropriate permits for disposal.

Water Well On Site: James Howell feels that the water well on site had been contaminated for many years before they became owner of the property. It is known to have been drilled in 1959 or in 1960. As far as he knows, the well is unfit for human use. It may have been contaminated by the nearby oil well or salt dome in the site.

Conclusion: The family

developments on this site. I have conferred this conversation to Mr. Tom Kearns for his attention and records.

Contacts: (1) James Howell - (915) 686-4104 Office
(915) 682-6106 Home

(2) Cheryl Cohom - (Attorneys for Viola N. Schwartz
and Janet Schwartz
4600 Post Oak Place, Suite 301
Houston, Texas 77027
(713) 961-0277

(3) William E. Heitkamp (Trustee for Debtor)
3315 Sul Rose, Suite 105
Houston, Texas 77098
(713) 523-8402